

Murtha: Nine Local Students Appointed to U.S. Military Academies

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that nine of his nominees to our nation's military academies have accepted appointments.

"One of the things I look forward to most each year is nominating students to our nation's military academies," commented Murtha. "I am so proud of these young men and women. They are among the very best and brightest students in our nation and I applaud their work and service both inside and outside the classroom. They represent the future leaders of our military, and I am honored that they have chosen to serve our great country. Joyce and I both wish them continued success throughout their academic and military service."

Murtha has sent over 400 kids to the Academies since 1974.

Those
who have accepted appointments are:

U.S. Naval Academy (www.usna.edu)

• Ian W. Benninger, son of J. Michael and Barbara Benninger of Smithfield, Fayette County, will be admitted to the USNA on July 1, 2009. He graduates from Albert Gallatin Area Senior High School this year where he is a member of the SADD Club, Interact Club, Young Astronaut's Club, Future Business Leaders of America Club, and National Honor Society. Benninger participated in football, wrestling, cross country, and track.

“I know that by attending the academy, I will receive an excellent education in engineering, my chosen major of study,” said Benninger. “In addition to the educational benefit, attending the academy will give me the opportunity to serve my country.”

• Alexander A. Chatman III, son of USMC Lt. Col. Alexander Jr. and Kate Chatman of Washington, Washington County, will be admitted to the USNA on July 1, 2009. The family currently resides in Dumfries, Virginia. Chatman graduates from Potomac Senior High School this year where he is a member of the Young Republicans and Christianship of Fellow Athletes. He participated in wrestling, cross country, and track.

“Through my experience as a Boy Scout leader, a team captain, and as a youth group leader I understand the difficulties and strains that can be put on a leader and this is a challenge for which I have been preparing for almost my entire life,” Chatman said. “It is because of a greater cause, service to our magnificent country, that I am committed to becoming a military officer, and I believe that the Naval Academy offers a unique opportunity to prepare for the rigors and strains of a military officer life style.”

• Stephen C. Meidus, son of Angela and the late Louis Meidus of West Leechburg, Westmoreland County, will be admitted to the USNA on July 1, 2009. He is a 2008 graduate of Leechburg Area High School where he was a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, SADD, Chorus, County Corus, Concert Band, Interact Club, Science Club, Spanish Club, and Pride Club. Meidus participated in baseball, basketball, and football. Meidus' brother, Alfonso, graduates from the USNA next week.

"My brother was the first from our school to attend the Academy," said Meidus. "It has given our students a new found respect for the military. It would be an honor to continue this legacy. I feel that the liberties that we take for granted exist only because of the few who put their lives on the line. It is a principle of serving a greater good. I would like to be one of those few."

• Joseph D. Rizzo, son of Anthony and Lynda Rizzo of Johnstown, Cambria County, will be admitted to the USNA on July 1, 2009. He is a 2008 graduate of Richland High School where he was a member of the Key Club and Spanish Club. Rizzo participated in football and basketball.

"My father, being a Naval Academy graduate, taught me about the Naval Academy at a young age and showed me what it is all about," Rizzo said. "I really see what it means to be a Midshipman and I wish to follow in my dad's footsteps."

U.S. Military Academy (www.usma.edu)

• Megan M. Maurer, daughter of Matthew and Lisa Maurer of Hollsopple, Somerset County, will be admitted to the USMA on June 29, 2009. She is a 2008 graduate of Conemaugh Township Area High School where she was a member of the Reading Team, Forensics Competition, Conservation Club, Spanish Club, Student Council, Community Service Club, SADD, and Ski Club. Maurer participated in basketball, volleyball, and track and field.

"Growing up amongst army veterans and service leaders, I have been inspired to take the military path," said Maurer. "I understand the demands that await me at West Point and am fully ready to step up to the plate."

I have strong pride in my country and am prepared to give everything I have to serve and protect her citizens and our freedom.”

• Emily B. McCarthy, daughter of Kevin and Betsy McCarthy of Eighty-Four, Washington County, will be admitted to the USMA on June 29, 2009. She graduates from Canon-McMillan Senior High School this year where she is a member of the French Club, Ski Club, Mock-Trial Lawyer, and French, German, and National Honor Societies. McCarthy participated in soccer, indoor/outdoor track, and swimming.

“Complacency has never been my nature, and as such I am drawn to the continuous personal growth and development fostered by the United States Army,” said McCarthy. “More important, it would be an honor to both represent and protect my country.”

• Aaron A. Retter, son of Randy and Joanne Retter of Apollo, Westmoreland County, will be admitted to the USMA on June 29, 2009. He is a 2008 graduate of Greensburg Central Catholic High School where he was a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, Key Club-Kiwanis Community Service Club, Pride Club, Students Against Drunk Driving, and Junior High Band. Retter participated in football, basketball, and baseball. His brother, Jason, is currently a sophomore at the U.S. Naval Academy.

“I feel strongly that the outstanding education and preparation for life, that the Academy provides, is an opportunity that I am eager to experience,” said Retter.

• Brad M. Strimel, son of Leon and Denise Strimel of Canonsburg, Washington County, will be admitted to the USMA on June 29, 2009. He graduates from Canon-McMillan Senior High School this year where he is a member of National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Spanish Club, Ski Club, Math League, and Lead CM Mentor Program. Strimel participated in football, hockey, baseball and track.

“Attending
the United States
Military Academy

has been a dream of mine since I was in Middle School,” said Strimel. “I want to serve on Active Duty as
an Army
officer because I feel it is my duty as an American citizen.”

• Joseph S. Walters, son of Joseph and Beverly
Walters of Pleasant Unity, Westmoreland
County, will be admitted
to the USMA on June 29, 2009. He
graduates from Greater Latrobe Senior High School this year where he is a
member of the National Honor Society.
Walters participated in the Lettermen’s Club, wrestling.

“Attending
the U.S. Military Academy would be a tremendous opportunity,” said Walters. “I would receive a world-
class education,
learn the skills necessary to be an Army officer, and wrestle with some of the
greatest athletes in the nation.”

#